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taking his small son or daughter for a walk through the village, pointing out various things seen on the way, and giving their names. Adults do not, I think, purposely talk to children in the 'baby fashion' affected by many people among ourselves when addressing small children. But like ourselves, they are proud to repeat to one another what their babies can say, and they used to enjoy explaining to me what was meant by a childish attempt at some hard word.

I give a few examples of childish efforts at pronouncing some of the common words of the language: *ia* = *ien* (fish); *uvi* = *uir* (coco-nut); *dada* = *gag* (short for *ruin a gag*, water to drink); *uku* = *tamu* (taro); *u* = *gu* (pig); *kulil* = *kurir* (beads); *kuli* = *kuka* (crab); *pota* = *potan* (sun); *iva* = *dʒivau* (moon); *tua* = *tsura* (fire); *dodo* = *inu* (sit down); *titi* = *tʃitʃi* (milk, or breast, said when hungry); *kāki* = *pāki* (carry pick-a-back). These were used by children of my acquaintance who would be perhaps between two and three years old. The speech of a child of four or rather over was quite intelligible to me.

Learning to walk.

Great interest is taken in the child's first attempts to stand upright, and it is helped in its efforts at walking by being held up with a sling made of the fibrous tissue that grows round the stem of the banana palm. The following 'medicine' is used to make a child learn to walk quickly:

When it first begins to crawl, take the roots of the tree *Toankinon* (belongs to *Rutaceae*), scrape off some of the small rootlets, chew them with the betel-mixture, spit on to your hand and pull on the child's legs, then rub the saliva over them.

At the point when our children are crawling, these babies seem to go through a stage of 'running on all fours', with the knees slightly bent and the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet flat on the ground (see Pl. 12). They crawl as well, but as soon as their interest is aroused in something at a little distance from them, they adopt the other method which is quicker. Nomoin, the baby in the photograph (Pl. 12*b*), was my next-door neighbour and a great friend. He would be crawling about in the ordinary way, but as soon as he saw me would make for me on all fours as hard as he could. At this stage he had cut his central incisors in both jaws, and also one lower lateral, and there were signs of the eruption of the

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145 481 left upper lateral, so presumably his age would be rather more than a year, assuming that teeth are cut approximately as in our own children. Since my return I have noticed some English children running on all fours in the same way, but I am sure it is less general 516 here than it seems to be among the Solomon Islanders. If a child sees anything on the ground that interests him, he will pick it up and sit back on his haunches, still keeping his soles flat on the 857 ground. A favourite amusement with one group of children was to set two babies of about this age a little distance away from them, and then attract their attention, so that they made for the other children, who watched to see which of them got there first. This was done so often that it appeared almost like an organized game, the babies enjoying it as much as the older children (Pl. 14*a*).

Methods of carrying babies.

854 There are no cradles, but sometimes a baby will be put to lie on a woman's hood spread on the ground. Most of its time, however, is spent in being either carried or nursed.

A very small infant is carried in the arms. Sometimes it will be supported also by having its legs put through a sling made of the broad fibre that grows round the stem of the banana palm, thus leaving one of the mother's hands free (Pl. 13*a*). At an early age it is set astride the hips, with the mother's hands clasped round it (Pl. 13*b*). A baby soon learns to stretch out its legs ready to be put in that position when it is lifted from the ground. If it is to be carried far, as on a journey, the child is frequently supported on the hip by a sling of banana fibre, or, nowadays, sometimes by means of an old loin-cloth, the other end of the sling being hung round its mother's neck. Men will also carry infants in this fashion. The native word for this method of carrying a child is *gi*. The [857] ordinary pick-a-back (*pāki*) is also used by both sexes, and this, more often than the hip position, is in favour with little girls, who often carry around a baby not much smaller than themselves. They clearly take a pride in so doing, and often used to bring their charges to let me see what a big baby they could carry. Often the child can run about quite well by itself and rather resents the indignity. To carry a child supported on the palm of the hand, in a standing position, is *di*, to perch the child on one's shoulder is *watok*. When the child is old enough to hang on securely, it is put to sit on the top of the load of wood or taro its mother is carry-

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PLATE 12

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CHILDREN RUNNING ON ALL FOURS

[facing p. 170]

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months before the menstruation ceremony, with which it was not in any way connected.

Owing to the impossibility of obtaining from these people any information whatever with regard to the passage of time, I cannot give the age at which girls begin to menstruate. To judge from their appearance, it would seem to vary considerably in different individuals. Nawi, with breasts not yet fully developed (see Pl. 31), had been expecting her first period for nine months or so before it actually occurred. Kiots, with little, if any, further advanced breast development, had been menstruating for more than a year. From the appearance of their breasts and pubic hair, I should estimate the ages of these girls to be somewhere about twelve or thirteen. Both had cut their second permanent molar teeth, the presence of which, among ourselves, is usually a sign that the twelfth birthday has been passed. Muben, looking decidedly older, with much fuller breasts, went through her first period about ten months earlier than Nawi, while I was told that Laia, whom I should have judged, from her looks, to be at least in her later teens, had started the flux at about the same time as Muben.

Unlike the first puberty ceremony for boys, which depends, not on their physiological development, but on the number of boys whose parents desire it, and upon the condition of the food supply, the puberty rite for girls is held for each girl singly, and at the actual time of her first period. There is also another difference. While all the boys, whether *tsunaun* or commoners, must undergo the same series of ceremonies in exactly the same manner, the puberty ceremony for girls is held, in its entirety, only for girls who are *tsunaun*. A very much shortened form, with important parts of the ritual omitted, is performed for commoners.

I will first give an account of the full ceremony for a *tsunaun*, as related to me by the women, chiefly by Pari, one of the most important women at Kurtatchi, and afterwards a description of the ceremony as I saw it performed for Nawi, who, though *tsunaun*, went through it in a modified form owing to special circumstances.

ACCOUNT OF GIRL'S FIRST MENSTRUATION CEREMONY AS GIVEN BY KURTATCHI WOMEN

When a girl finds that she is bleeding for the first time, she does not like it, she is afraid, she hides in the bush. She runs away from her mother, and does not tell her, but her mother guesses what has

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horse-play with them, jumping over them and pulling them about, but there was nothing that could be called playing at sexual intercourse. This part of the ceremony had to be modified on account of the approaching *vatawutf*.

The second *kōbū* was put on the ledge just inside the door at the men's end of the hut, and all the men present drank from it, both the two who were inside the hut and those who remained outside at the *tagoan*. When all had drunk, it was filled up with more coco-nut milk, poured through the bundle as before, and the contents were then poured into half-coco-nut shells, with the meat still in them. These were sent to Pinari, who was not present. Coco-nuts were also filled from the *kōbū* out of which the women had drunk, and these were sent to a group of women with babies who were sitting at the women's end of the hut and on the women's verandah.

Nawi wore a hood with a pattern worked on it in fibre. All the women still had cordyline leaves tucked into cane girdles, which they wore over their loin-cloths. The leaves were allowed to hang down, either in front or at both sides. Nawi wore hers in front, under her loin-cloth, which she had resumed; over it she had several girdles of red cane. I was also given cordyline leaves, and asked to wear them in my belt, with the earnest request that I should not throw them away afterwards. They said it would be all right for me to press the leaves and keep them in my box, which I did. Those worn by the other women were to be put up in the rafters of the hut, together with the *kōbū* used to contain the drinking mixture, and dried in the smoke which is constantly rising from the smouldering fire on the floor of the hut. This hardening of the *kōbū* and cordyline leaves is to ensure that Nawi's flux will not occur again too quickly. When she is married, her mother will prepare some ceremonial pudding, of which all the women will partake, and the leaves and the *kōbū* will then be thrown into the sea.

Nawi tells me that her flow has finished. Since its onset was announced on Friday morning, it has lasted two days and two nights, or possibly three nights, if it began early in the night of Thursday–Friday.

When all the men and women present had drunk some of the mixture out of the *kōbū*, Nawi was given a basket of roast taro cut into thin slices, each slice smeared thickly with *owan* on both sides, and a little packet of taro leaves, cooked in the embers. She ate

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and in the ceremony as I saw it, the time during which the girl remained in her mother's hut was only five days. But in discussion, informants told me that she used to remain in her mother's hut for one month after the first discovery of the flux. At Saposa, also, the longer interval was given.

At Saposa there is a further elaboration. A wooden figure, life-size or larger, is carved out of soft wood, to represent a girl ornamented as she would be for this ceremony, with her hair dressed and painted, and a tortoise-shell filigree ornament round her neck. The pattern of the cicatrization on her body is also indicated. This figure is kept in her mother's hut during the period of her seclusion. It appears also at her wedding. One such figure, which I saw during a brief visit to Saposa, had been made for a girl who had died; it was to be burnt after a suitable interval with other of her belongings (Pl. 32).

WOMEN'S VIEWS ON MENSTRUATION

The reason given by the natives for holding the ceremony above described is one which I have not seen put forward elsewhere, namely, to ensure that the girl does not menstruate too frequently or too freely. All the details of the ritual appeared to be directed towards this end, e.g. avoidance of drinking any liquid or eating taro boiled in water during the period of the flux, the use of hard-timbered trees in the preparation of the appropriate mixture to be drunk by all, including the girl herself, at one stage of the proceedings, and the preservation in the rafters of the hut of the package containing the roots and leaves from which this mixture is prepared, to be hardened by the smoke, and thrown away when a child is desired. In all discussions arising out of the ceremony, and from several different informants, this was the only explanation that was forthcoming, and I see no reason to doubt its validity.

The usual duration of the menstrual period *irir* (*ira* = blood) among these women would appear to be three days per month. No one reported a semi-monthly period. A few told me that they had it for one or two days only. One case of five days was reported indirectly; I was also told that the woman in question was not in the habit of taking any of the medicines for controlling the flux which appear to be in universal use. Since data of this sort cannot be checked by personal observation, and in view of the vagueness of all these people in regard to any question of time, I feel no great

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145 841 confidence in the accuracy of this information, and merely give it as the best I could get. Menstrual disturbances would appear to be rare. Only one of the women I questioned on the subject admitted to pain at the period, but all were unanimous in voting it a nuisance, and nearly all said that they shortened its duration, or caused it to be omitted for one, two, or three months by taking some of the numerous medicines. They assured me that the omission was not followed by any harmful consequences.

841 824 Eight different plants were brought to me as being useful for this purpose, and I think it likely that this list is far from complete. Unfortunately, most of them could not be identified from my pressed specimens. The following, however, are known to the authorities at Kew Gardens: *kakariuk* (*Selaginella flabellata*), *ſip-ſip* (*Pteris ensiformis*), *tatsir* (*Menispermacea*, variety indeterminable). The procedure is the same in every case. While the flow is in progress, the root is chewed with the betel-mixture; some of this mash is swallowed, the rest is spat on to the hand and rubbed over the abdomen, generally by the woman herself, but sometimes by another person. It is noteworthy that the purpose of all of these was expressly stated to be that of lessening the flow or shortening its duration. None was mentioned as useful in cases where menstruation is accompanied by pain, which supports the statement of the women that this condition is rare.

It does not seem likely that all of the plants which are supposed to control the flux do, in fact, possess any astringent or other properties which would render them effective as a uterine haemostatic, though some of them may do so. The only relevant analysis I have been able to find is that of a variety of *Menispermaceae* (*Jateorhiza palmata*), the root of which contains columbin, berberine, and columbic acid. This is used in Africa and in India as a cure for dysentery and other affections of the bowels, and in Europe as a tonic (Dymock, p. 18).

It is easy to understand the woman's dislike of a lengthy menstrual period, especially as, apart from the inconvenience, it involves her in several irritating taboos. She must not prepare food for any man, including her husband, which means that she has to arrange for some one else to cook his meals. She must not go to work in the taro garden; if she did, pigs would eat the taro plants and the crop would be poor. She must not go in a *waa* (plank canoe) or a storm would arise and the canoe would capsize. She must not go